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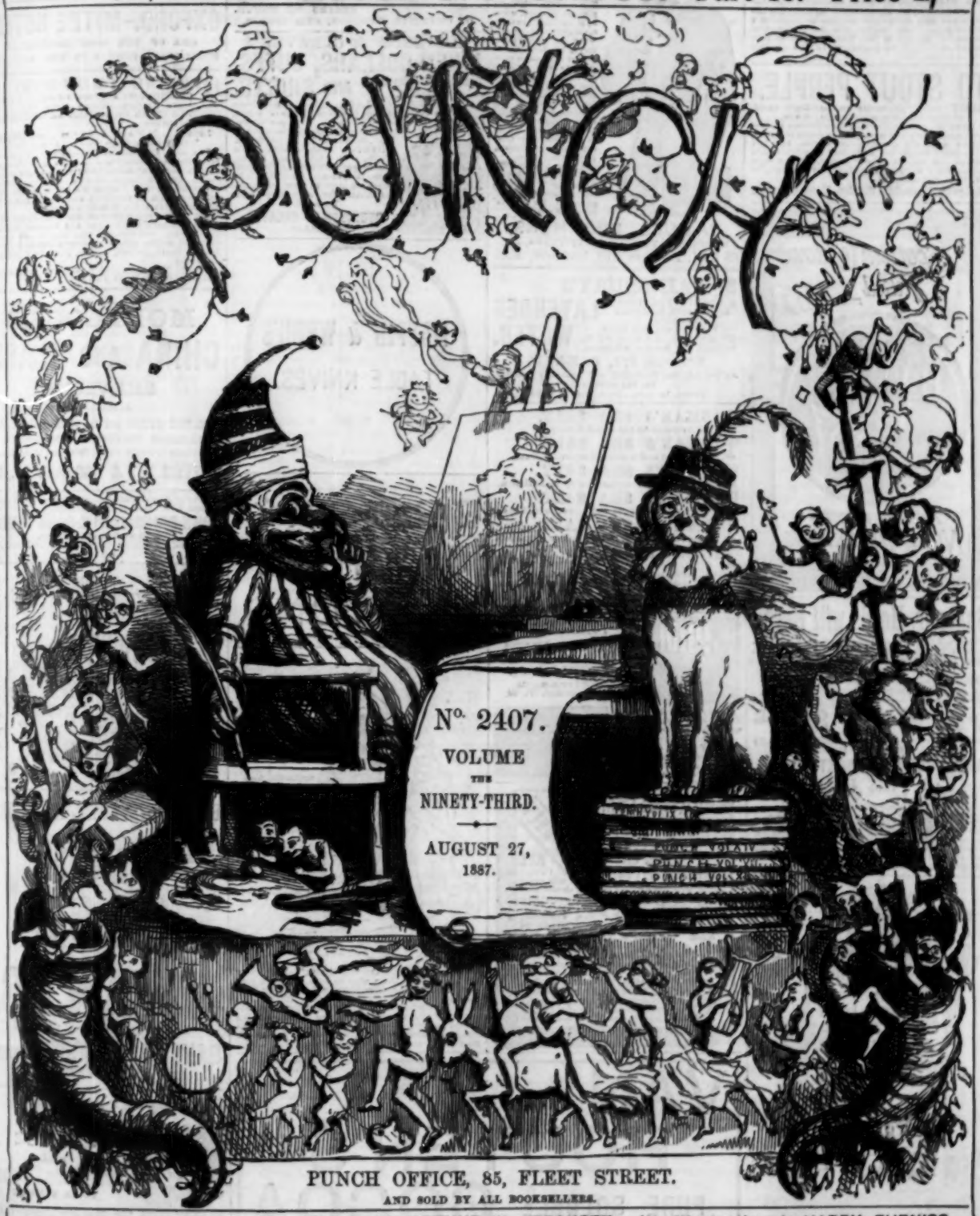

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THE PRICE OF SUPPORT.

A Fragment of a coming Contemporary Romance.

"Is it possible that Mr. Gladstone, not content with having allied himself with the Parnellites, or with having endeavoured to sow jealousies between the component parts of the United Kingdom, is at last endeavouring to purchase the parliamentary support of the South-Eastern Railway? The idea seems almost too humiliating to be entertained; but it is not easy to place any other interpretation upon this new and startling announcement. Can it be conceived that the safety of England ranks as nothing in his estimation when it is brought into competition with the possibility of winning a few votes from the interested supporters of a commercial enterprise?"—*Times.*

VOL. I.—The Compact.

It was on a sultry August evening in the memorable year 1887 that a stranger, whose anxious gaze, now and again fixed on the entrance, denoted the fact that he was awaiting the arrival of one of the Members, crossed and re-crossed the pavement of the Hall of the Reform Club with a step that indicated a high condition of nervous trepidation. To the casual observer he might have passed for a solicitor in an extreme state of irritability. The Hall-Porter, however, who had watched him narrowly, had recognised him for who he was. He knew that the restless interloper, who had several times peered into his carpet-bag, and examined specimens of Channel chalk, and had, when he thought no one was looking, hacked a London, Chatham and Dover trains'-bill with his penknife, was no other than the famous Sir Edward Watkin, the then Chairman of the South-Eastern Railway Company. He approached him.

"He won't be long," he said, intuitively guessing the object of his visit, and addressing him kindly. "Ha! hark! Here he comes!" He had scarcely spoken, when a roaring cheer, borne on the sweet evening air, broke the comparative silence of the street outside, and in another minute a surging and struggling mob, who were shouting themselves hoarse, had deposited safely from their shoulders, on the door-step of the Club, their great hero and idol, whom they had thus, as was their wont, nightly carried in triumph from the House.

The ex-Premier, for indeed the buoyant bearing, the high shirt-collar, and the contagious enthusiasm of the new arrival proclaimed his identity at once, dashed up the steps three at a time, and, waving a radiant farewell of thanks to the crowd, bounded into the Hall, where, seeing the stranger, he instantly seized him by the arm, and hurriedly led him to a recess.

"This is very good and genial of you, my dear Sir Edward," he commenced.

The other eyed him cautiously. "You wanted to see me?" he rejoined, sulkily.

"Yes, indeed!" was the brisk reply. "I wished to tell you that, as you had been wicked enough,—ha! ha!—to conceive the idea of uniting England and France by a Tunnel, I had been wicked enough also to determine to help you to do it. Ha! ha!" He laughed long and loud. His interlocutor stared at him for a few moments aghast. Then he clutched him.

"You mean this?" he asked, growing pale with excitement as he spoke. "You mean that you will vote for the Bill?"

"Not only vote for the Bill, but make it a Government measure." As he spoke he was interrupted by a commotion in Pall Mall. Some Junior Members of the Carlton were by way of a practical joke, common enough at this season, dropping a Unionist Liberal out of the first-floor windows into the area, and their merriment over the exploit resounded loudly down the street. The ex-Premier heard it and a wonderful smile played upon his almost beautiful features. "You see, they are going to pieces next door," he added exultingly, "I shall be in in a few weeks, nothing can stop me; and then, I give you my word, you shall have your Tunnel."

The other approached him. There was a curious look in his eye. "You have your price?" he asked. "Name it," he added under his breath, glancing around him furtively to see they were not overheard.

The great Statesman winked knowingly. "Merely the South-Eastern vote," he whispered. "Come, is it a bargain at that?"

"Done!" was the quick rejoinder. They grasped hands.

"Show this gentleman to a four-wheeler," said the ex-Premier.

So they parted. But as the Grand Old Politician turned towards the supper-room there was a fine triumphant lustre beaming in his eye, for he knew, that if he had possibly betrayed his country, he had at least squared the Railway Company. He had made the *compact!*

VOL. II.—Paid in Full.

The country was about to face a great crisis in its history. Yet, as the year 1894 opened, there were little evidences of the approaching storm. It is true that the Gladstone Cabinet were still in power, and were passing exasperating measures. But this was nothing new. Last year they had abolished Compulsory Vaccination, and had passed the Country Estates Popular Appropriation Act. They had inaugurated the first Session of the present one by suppressing the Volunteer Movement, and cutting down the Naval and Military votes respectively to the modest figure of £2,000,000 a year; and they pointed to the Channel Tunnel, now opened about sixteen months, for a triumphant vindication of these Imperial economies. They argued that a country that could pour a perpetual stream of Cook's Tourists night and day over to the Continent, had given a guarantee for preserving International peace such as would warrant it in reducing the expense for its defences to a pecuniary minimum; and, though they met with some opposition from the Permanent Departments, and were hotly criticised by an angry mob of naval and military men, who found themselves, at a moment's notice, both thrown out of work, and deprived of their pay, they, nevertheless, carried their point, and effected the proposed reductions. But a thunder-clap was about to fall upon the unsuspecting country from a blue sky, and the Channel Tunnel, which had inspired its misguided leaders with a baseless confidence, was destined to inflict the shock.

It became known in London suddenly on the morning of the Tuesday in the Easter Recess that the approaches to the Tunnel had been suddenly seized by a hostile French force that had landed by the night-mail disguised as tourists, and that the key of the apparatus destined to flood it in any case of emergency, was not forthcoming, the Chairman of the Company, who had charge of it, having suddenly disappeared without leaving his address. It was also further rumoured that the guns commanding the shore-exit had been spiked by active Shareholders anxious to protect their property from destruction at all hazards, and were useless. When, therefore at eleven o'clock, the second edition of the morning papers announced that a French army was pouring through the Tunnel, and occupying the neighbouring heights, at the rate of ten thousand men an hour, the panic became indescribable. Nor did it diminish when it was further known that the French Ambassador, leaving a threatening ultimatum behind him, had that afternoon taken his departure for Paris. The country flew to arms. Sir Archibald Harrison hastily collected the available force at Aldershot, and took up his position on the Hog's Back, and awaited the approach of the enemy with 213 men, all told, and three guns. They took no notice of him. At twelve the following day it was known that the Duke of Cambridge, falling back on Sydenham, in command of a handful of Volunteers and a squadron of the Household Cavalry hurriedly got together, had capitulated in the Refreshment Department.

The details of the disaster spread like wildfire. The consternation was terrific. The Lord Mayor went into hysterics, and was, by common consent, removed to Colney Hatch, while an angry mob invaded the War Office, and seizing any members of the Ordnance Committee they could lay hold of, forthwith dragged them out, and lynched them in Pall Mall. That same evening a French army, 350,000 strong, entered London in triumph.

A few outrages marked this occupation. The Nelson Column was thrown down, Waterloo Bridge blown up, Piccadilly re-christened the Rue Boulanger, and the whole of Madame Tussaud's Collection seized as National property.

So matters stood, but the cutting off of the food supply, thirty shillings being charged at a West-End Club for a plate of indifferent tinned-rabbit, soon brought matters to a crisis. The Cabinet that at the first approach of the enemy, had instantly retired to the Island of Lewis, came cautiously up to town and opening negotiations for peace with the French Government, finally signed the Tottenham Court Road treaty, and provided for the evacuation of the country by the invader. The terms were stringent and somewhat severe. In addition to agreeing to the cession of India, Australia, the Cape, Canada and all her Mediterranean possessions, together with the division of her Fleet among the Navies of Europe, England undertook to pay an indemnity in ready money at the Bank of England of five-hundred millions sterling.

* * * * *

As a cordon of French troops was keeping back the sullen crowd that thronged the space in front of the Royal Exchange and watched the waggons heavily laden with the bullion that was about to be transferred to the South-Eastern Railway for transmission to France, a tall, elastic figure wearing a high shirt-collar, pushed eagerly up the steps of the Mansion House, and gazed reflectively at the scene that was being enacted below. Presently some one touched it. It turned.

"Ha! Sir Edward," was the bright recognition, "who would ever have thought of meeting you again, and who would ever have conceived," the cheery voice continued, "that our little compact should have ended in this!" The speaker pointed with a significant smile to the waggons of bullion lumbering beneath. "Well," responded the other with a suggestive dryness, "my support got you into power at any rate!"

A marvellous brightness overspread the features of his interlocutor. "Yes, it did," he replied, "and though I am quite confident that posterity will say it was worth the price, I see," he added airily, waving his hand in the direction of the Bank, "that at the present moment it is apparently being *paid in full!*"

REMARKS ONE WOULD RATHER HAVE LEFT UNANSWERED.

"Well, good-bye, dear Mrs. Jones. I 'm afraid I 've put you out by calling at this unearthly hour." "Oh, I hope I didn't show it!"

SALUBRITIES ABROAD.

Hotel Continental, Royat.—Our party here (which, somehow or another, Puller has contrived to get together and introduce to each other by the simple means of inducing M. Hall to give us a room to ourselves for a small *table-d'hôte* at the un-Royat-like hour of 7·30) consists of La Contessa Casanova, the English wife of an Italian merchant, the head of a large house of business in London—she is Marchesa or Contessa, I am not certain which, but Puller styles her *Miladi* and *Madame*. She is devoted to the serious Drama, and her pet subject is Salvini in *Othello*. Her daughter, an elegant young English girl, lively, amusing, and with a bias in favour of the very lightest forms of theatrical entertainment.

Then we have Madame Metterebun and her daughters, Anglo-Germans, thorough musicians, with Wagner at their fingers' ends,—literally, as they are accomplished pianists. There is Mrs. Dinderlin, who was here last year, and is taking the waters seriously, and who knows when to put in the right word at the right moment. Cousin Jane who is taking the waters still more seriously and who is an excellent listener: myself an impartial referee: and Puller the Solicitor out for a holiday, who is alternately in the highest of spirits or the lowest depths of depression, according as the waters and weather affect him. Outside our party there are others whom I meet occasionally, consisting of the lady who finds fault with everything French, the gentleman who laughs at everything French, the grumbler whom nothing satisfies, the contented man who is pleased with everything, the man who after being here a day is intensely bored, the man who from the moment of his arrival is always studying Guide-books and *indicateurs* to see what is the best and easiest way of getting away again: the patient who has come all the way here to see the Doctor and then refuses to do anything he tells him: the patient who has come to find out what on earth is the matter with him: the man who doctors himself, and two or three ladies of my acquaintance of whom I only catch occasional glimpses as they issue from Sedan-chairs or muffled up like the Turkish women, merely recognise me with their eyes, incline their heads and pass on their way with a little drinking-glass in their hands.

To me Royat is an amusing place: it is certainly a pretty one, and its waters in most cases are decidedly of lasting benefit. What those "most cases" are, the patients themselves best know.

* * * * * * * *

For expanse there is nothing like the sea, and for grandeur the snow mountains. Unless I go up to the Puy de Dôme—which I do not mean to do, for I have been up there once, and never, never, never will go there again—I cannot see either. And even from the top of the Puy you can only discern the sea, or Mont Blanc, with a very good glass, on a very clear day.

* * * * *

M. Boisgobey's description of a Parisian Club in his latest book (I delight in Boisgobey now that there is no Gaboriau) called *Grippe-Soleil* will amuse London Club members. The only two Clubs in Paris I ever saw were not a bit like Boisgobey's description.

* * * * *

When anyone who has been under treatment a week, unexpectedly meets a friend here, he stops short, stares at him, examines him from head to foot, and then exclaims, in a tone of utter astonishment, "What!! *you* here!!" as if the new arrival were either an intruder or a lunatic. The person thus addressed immediately retorts in an injured tone, "Well, what on earth are *you* here for?" and then he adds maliciously, "there doesn't seem to be much the matter with *you*." Now to say this is to utter your deliberate opinion that the person you are addressing is at Royat (or any other Salubrity Abroad wherever it may be) under the false pretence of being an invalid, and is therefore, to put it plainly, a shammer, an impostor.

* * * * *

After this greeting, explanations follow. The first man has to prove his right to be at Royat, and the second man has to admit the evidence to be incontestable, on the condition, implied but not expressed, of his own case being taken as thoroughly warranting his taking the baths and *traitement* generally at Royat.

* * * * *

Then comes the question of Doctors. "Who shall decide when Doctors disagree?"—but who shall decide when patients disagree about Doctors? "Whom do you go to?" asks the suffering Smith of the invalid Brown. "Well," says Brown, apologetically,—because he is not sure, this being his first visit, that he might not have gone to a better man, "I go to Dr. Chose," and noticing the astonishment depicted on his friend's face, he hastens to explain, "Squills sent me to him." The suffering Smith professes himself puzzled to know why on earth Squills always sends his patients to Chose. "Dr. Rem 's the man for you, my boy," says Smith. But Brown feels that he is in the toils of Squills, and that it would not be fair to him or to Chose, if he suddenly left the latter and sought the advice of Dr. Rem, on the sole recommendation of Smith who, after all, is not a professional.

* * * * *

Then two *habitués* meet. "I always go to Chose," says eczematic Jones, dogmatically, "first-rate fellow, Chose. All the French go to him. *They* know." "Ah!" returns gouty Robinson, with conviction, "I never have been to anyone but Rem. He 's the chap. All the English go to him. Best man in Royat." And if it weren't the hour for one of them to go and drink Eugénie water, and for the other to take his second glass of St. Mart, they would have a row and come to blows.

* * * * *

Puller tells me that there 's one London Doctor, describing himself as a Gynæcologist ("A guinea-cologist," parenthetically remarks Puller), who always sends his patients here. I think he says his name is Dr. Barnes. "He sends so many," says Puller, "that I propose changing the name of the place from Royat-les-Bains into Royat-les-Barnes." I see why he introduced the name of Barnes. Fortunately he is so delighted

MR. PUNCH'S HISTORICAL PARALLELS. No. 2.

THE LORDLY CECIL ENTERTAINS HIS SOVEREIGN. HATFIELD, 1573 AND 1887.

with this *jeu de mot*, which I fancy I've heard before, that he is off to tell his friends in the Parc, and, as I pass a group, I overhear him explaining the point of it to a French lady and her husband, with whom he has a speaking acquaintance. For PULLER likes what he calls "airing his French," and is not a bit shy.

* * * * * *

The Band is performing another new tune! How is this? I can account for it. It rained nearly all yesterday, and so the musicians didn't come out. How did they occupy themselves? In rehearsal. Well here's one good effect of rain at Royat, it brings out the new tunes.

A Pretty Plate to Set Before the Queen.

"The Queen's Plates are henceforth to be devoted to improving the breed of horses."

A MOST wise change that sense for long has wished,
But, Phœbus! how the "Platers" will be dished!

AN INVITATION.

(*To a well-known Air.*)

"Mr. FREDERICK MAUDE, Honorary Secretary of the 'Liberal Union,' has resigned that post in consequence of his disapproval of the attitude taken up by the leaders of the 'Liberal Unionist' party towards the leaders of the Liberal party, and of his inability to support the programme of a Tory Government."

COME back to Hawarden, MAUDE,
For the Tory black flag 's flown!
Come back to Hawarden, MAUDE,
Leave HARTY and JOE alone;
For the Government plainly is all abroad,
And the Unionist game is blown.

A "CHEF DOUVRES."—The L. C. & D.'s new steamer *Empress*.

ALL IN PLAY.

Dear Mr. Punch,—Town is supposed to be empty, except of the poor persons who are forced to attend the Houses of Parliament, and the toiling millions of the East End, who are, however, of no account in the West. In spite of this dearth of population, the Gaiety (which I attended on your behalf, looking and feeling as much like you as I possibly could) was very full on the first night of *Loyal Love*, a play which has apparently been put upon the stage for the personal and exclusive benefit of Mrs. Brown-Potter.

Saved by the Bottle.

Certainly this talented lady has vastly improved since she made her first appearance in *Man and Wife*, and has only to continue at the same rate of progress to become in a very short time a really admirable actress. *Loyal Love* is rather a foolish piece, and reminded me equally of the *Lady of Lyons*, *Romeo and Juliet*, and *Box and Cox*. The plot was feeble in the extreme; and had not Mrs. Brown-Potter made a decided point by calling a rude and ancient king, who *would* wear his hat in the presence of ladies, "Old Man," I really think the performance would have fallen rather flat. As it was, the phrase (which was accepted by the "first-nighters" as a colloquial "Americanism") put everyone in good humour, and the last Act, with its amusing mock poisonings, and comical arrests and counter-arrests, went with every token of genial satisfaction. By the way, the "bottle trick" (by which poison is turned into wine) should be treated more avowedly in a spirit of burlesque. Were a decanter of pantomimic proportions introduced, the effect would be excellent. *Loyal Love* is not a good name for this funny little—it is only in four Acts—play. It is a pity, as the hero and heroine are always declaring that they would like to live and die together on a desert island, that it was not called *Mr. and Mrs. Robinson Crusoe*, with an explanatory subtitle of the *Purposeless Plotter, the Death-Dealing Wine-Cellar, and the Grand Old King*.

Heroic Proportions.

At the Adelphi a new and original drama called *The Bells of Haslemere*, has been produced amidst the enthusiastic applause of the entire Press. I am sorry to say I was a little disappointed. No doubt my expectations had been unduly raised by the "notices." It appeared to me that there was nothing absolutely and entirely new and original in the play, save a series of hats worn by Mr. John Beauchamp in the character of a fraudulent trustee. However, it is only just to say that the *chapeaux* of *Joseph Thorndyke* were *unique*. Had they been produced as "exhibits" to an affidavit read during a summons heard before one of the Chief Clerks in the Chancery Division of the High Court of Justice, they must have assisted materially in rendering virtue triumphant, ay, with or without an appeal to the Judge. One of the authors of the piece, Mr. Sydney Grundy, is a well-known barrister, and no doubt the legal training of this learned gentleman suggested their most appropriate introduction.

A Hat(e)ful Character.

Joseph Thorndyke uncovered, might have been faithful to his *cestui que* trust, but *in* his hat he could only have proved—what, alas! he was—a fraudulent trustee. Mr. Terriss as *Frank Beresford*, bore a striking resemblance to the naval lieutenant in the *Harbour Lights* whose escape from one action (on board ship) to defend another (in a police court) roused the enthusiasm of the pit and gallery for so many hundred nights, and Miss Millward in both pieces was much about the same individual. But in spite of this conventionality, the play was decidedly interesting to the audience, who filled the cheaper parts of the house. In fact I am inclined to believe that the critics are right, and that *The Bells* will ring for any number of nights. The scenery was admirable, and I should like to see it again. I am not quite so sure that anything else in the drama would induce me to pay the Adelphi a second visit. Stay, I think I should like to bestow another glance on Mr. Beauchamp's hats. I am all but certain, that from a fraudulent-trustee-point-of-view, they are absolutely faultless,—yes, absolutely faultless.

The Crystal Palace, now that the new Bill is on the fair road to become law, seemingly has taken a fresh lease of popularity. The evening *fêtes* are a great feature, and jaded Londoners can scarcely do better than to take a train from Victoria or St. Paul's, and spend a pleasant couple of twilight hours amidst the lamps and (on Thursdays) the fireworks. In the daytime there is always an excellent panorama, and frequently a successful play performed by its original London company. This last has always a charm for

Yours most truly,

One who has Gone to Pieces.

ADAM SLAUGHTERMAN.*

By Walker Weird, Author of "Hes Hes," "Solomon's Encers," &c.

CHAPTER I.—Blood Relations.

"It is very kind of you to come round," I said, to my two friends, Sir Harry and Bong, as they threw themselves violently into two arm-chairs (which almost broke under the brutal force of their descent), and emptied two casks of whiskey.

very sincerely yours
Adam Slaughterman

As I looked at Sir Harry, with his wide shoulders and deeper chest, I could not help thinking what a curious contrast I was to him, with my head of grizzled hair cut short and starting up like a half-worn scrubbing-brush. Then there was Bong, who is not like either of us, being short, dark, stout,—*very* stout,—with twinkling black eyes everlastingly hidden by blue spectacles.

"Look here, old fellow," said Sir Harry, "why shouldn't we give up civilisation, and go in for the mud—I mean blood—baths in South Africa?

I fairly jumped at his words.

"Nothing I should like better. And you, Bong?"

Bong is so overpoweringly frivolous.

"I'll go, because I am getting fat."

"Shut up, Bong," said Sir Harry, and then we screamed at the witticism for three hours. After that we started for Africa, in search of the land of the White-eyed Kaffirs, which we believed to be somewhere south of the Westminster Aquarium, the Alhambra, and other Music-Halls in which a specimen of the race had occasionally been seen.

On our arrival in Africa we found our old friend, Umbugsoapygas, with his huge battle-axe (playfully called Kosikutums or "the brain-pricker," from a habit he had of chipping life out of a man's cranium), awaiting us. He was a huge savage, with a large piece of loose skin concealing the right side of his face, which was absolutely boneless. Umbugsoapygas was delighted to see us.

"O cove, O cove-dat-am-cool!"—(Oh individual, oh individual without the influence of passion!)—"brave one, great one! Let me come with thee to swim in gore!"

I let him say this, as I saw his enthusiasm was producing a marked effect upon the minds of some niggers that were listening to him. But after he had said it, I thought it better to stop his vapouring;

* *Editor.* Surely I have heard this title before, or one very similar to it?
Author. No, I think not.

for there is nothing I hate so much as this Zulu system of extravagant praising—"zwaggering," as they call it.

"Shut up!" I cried, the more especially as I saw that he was getting the blood-fever upon him, and savagely destroying with his huge axe a spider's cobweb.

He gave me a sort of nod, and seized the niggers by their throats until their eyes cracked. Then, with roars of laughter (for they really looked most ridiculous), we followed the blacks into the boat, and went to the Mission House of the Rev. Bang McSaxpence, without any further adventure than cutting off at the wrist the hand of one of the murderous tribe of Lorkymussies.

CHAPTER II.—Mission Work in South Africa.

The Rev. Bang McSaxpence and his wife and child lived in great comfort amidst the people they had taught so carefully. I do not quite know what the educational curriculum happened to be, but no doubt it would have merited the approval of the London School Board. They had a French cook, called Adolphe, who seemingly had been obtained from a travelling Circus that no doubt had passed the Mission House in the course of a provincial tour.

"Oh, the monster! See the horrible man. He is a Mister Black," said Adolphe, looking at Umbugsoapygas. The savage in a moment had dragged out the little Frenchman's eyes, thrown them high in the air, rubbed them in salt, and replaced them in their sockets. Bong, Sir Harry, and I could not help laughing.

A little later we were called in by Mrs. Bang McSaxpence, and soon were enjoying a really good cup of tea. I was putting forth my hand for a fresh supply, when the breakfast-things were knocked over by a head freshly severed from the trunk.

"Rough and *reddy!*" I suggested, with a laugh.

"Another carpet spoiled!" said gentle Mrs. McSaxpence, trying to wipe out the deep crimson stain.

"This is serious," observed the Rev. Bang McSaxpence arming himself with a carving-knife, "the Lorkymussies are upon us. And, to cause me greater annoyance, they have kidnapped my daughter Tottie."

This turned out to be the case, and although we could not help smiling at the notion of a fair-haired little girl being at the mercy of some clumsy, tomahawking, brutal cannibals, we felt very sorry for the bereaved father.

We started. The first victim was a sentinel. Umbugsoapygas clutched him by the throat and pulling his head back, tore it off with a crack, like the popping of a soda-water cork. Then we were upon them. There were yells, crashes, and blood all over the place. The "Brain-pricker" was here there and everywhere, scooping out brains just like a cheese-scoop scoops out cheese to be tasted by the customers of a London butterman. It really was all very amusing, and in spite of our servants being absolutely cut to pieces, we were in the gayest spirits imaginable. That all should end happily, who should turn up at the last moment but Tottie, with a little pail into which the dear child had poured the heart's blood of some of her persecutors.

"I shot six of them with my own little revolver," said the interesting infant, as I stroked her golden-hair with my crimson-coloured fingers; "wasn't it clever of me?"

We had a very good lunch, the *poulet à la Portugaise* of Adolphe being particularly worthy of a second helping. After this meal was over, I went to the Rev. Bang McSaxpence, and taking him by the arm, observed,

"I really think you ought to give up this sort of life. You see you owe a duty to your wife and daughter—especially the latter, who, if she does not receive any education, and only mixes with bloodthirsty cannibals, may grow up wild, shunning her kind."

"You are right, Slaughterman," replied the Minister, straightening his carving-knife, which since the night before had severed many a human rib. "I made up my mind to it this very morning, just before I began my hacking and slaying. I won't risk another fight, but leave it to a younger Clergyman. And besides, between you and me, I am well off. It is thirty thousand pounds I am worth to-day, and every farthing of it made by honest trade, and savings in the bank at Zanzibar—for living costs me here next to nothing."

"You are right."

"I am sure of it," answered the Clergyman. "I will turn my back upon this place in a month. But it will be a wrench—it will be a wrench."*

CHAPTER III.—Water on the Brain.

We left the Rev. Bang McSaxpence (whose successor, by the way, was killed and eaten six weeks later), taking with us the little Adolphe (a most invaluable butt for our buffooneries), and voyaged into the Unknown. We got into a boat, and throwing overboard some niggers to pick up dead swans, they were immediately (much to our amusement) drowned. This made us think, and we came to the conclusion that they must have been carried to death by a current. In a moment our canoe began to fly along as if seized with a mighty hand, and we were in a tunnel. The water hurried us along, and we had scarcely time to notice that we were passing now "Baker Street Station," now "Portland Road," now "King's Cross," when we were close to a gigantic lily of fire that nearly roasted us. We passed, got to some rocks, and were trying to get a cab, or at least a fly, when we suddenly came across a number of spiders. They were dreadful creatures. They foamed at the mouth, screamed at one another, and devoured their invalid relations.

Here I should like to pause to write something *really* terrible about these spiders, but must hurry on, as there is still a deal of killing to be done before I get to the end of my narrative. Enough to say I may return to those spiders some of these days, and out of their webs spin a three-volume novel of unusual grimness and humour.

Shortly after this we emerged from the tunnel (passing by a place called Gloucester Road), and found ourselves in the land of the White-eyed Kaffirs.*

CHAPTER IV.—Quite Killing.

The country we now occupied was called New Pendy—no doubt because it had never been written about before. It is not very necessary to describe the lands or the people; and really the most remarkable thing in the place was a staircase, of a very wonderful character. Let the reader imagine, if he can, a splendid stairway, sixty-five feet from balustrade to balustrade, consisting of two vast flights, each of one hundred and twenty-five steps, of eight inches in height, by three feet broad, connected by a flat resting-place sixty feet in length, and running from the palace wall, on the edge of the precipice down to meet a waterway or canal cut to its foot from the river. This was the great staircase, the magnificence of which fairly took our breath away.†

Having described the staircase, it is only necessary to say that the New Pendies were governed by two Queens, one of whom fell in love with Sir Harry and married him, quarrelled with her sister, and engaged in a civil war which rent the country in twain. This naturally occasioned a good deal of bloodshed. Never shall I forget the manner in which Tryleapyea (the lady who honoured Sir Harry with her preference) wooed that individual. When they first met they could not speak the same language, so she took a pencil from me and made a delightful little sketch, which I give in the margin. There is no difficulty in recognising a bride expressing admiration at a wedding-cake.

* * *

Need I say that after her marriage Tryleapyea's subjects had the most terrible fight with the subjects of her sister Saramariah, which was chiefly waged on the stair-case. This happened after I and Umbugsoapygas had performed together a kind of "Turpin's Ride to York," from the battlefield. Adolphe escaped to post these memoirs—Umbugsoapygas was cut to pieces. Sir Henry and Bong in his blue spectacles, were kept for ever in the New Pendy country, and, finally, I myself was killed, funeralled, and cremated.‡

* *Editor.* Surely I have read this conversation, almost word for word, somewhere?

Author. No, I think not.

* *Editor.* The description of the tunnel seems to have some reference to a recent flooding of the Metropolitan Railway?

Author. No, I think not.

† *Editor.* Surely I have read this wonderfully graphic description of a flight of steps somewhere before?

Author. No, I think not.

‡ *Author.* Stop, stop, this is disgraceful! Why into about a dozen lines you have compressed two-thirds of my story! I had pages, and pages, and pages of slaughter! If you do not print them in full, I am sure the public will be disappointed!

Editor. No, I think not!

A Rise in Balloons.—It would seem that Aërostation, with an an eye to affairs, has at length advanced to a possibility within the range of practical enterprise. Messrs. Jovis and Mallet, in their late balloon ascent from Paris, were accompanied by two Guinea-Pigs. Had these partakers of their voyage been deputed to attend that expedition in the interest, as Directors, of an Aërial Navigation Company? And did they, in their official capacity, get the customary guineas, and enjoy the lunch provided as usual for their refreshment in the discharge of their arduous duties? If so, of course, it can't be said that a balloon was a place where those Guinea-Pigs had no business. The Balloon also contained two Pigeons; but these perhaps were birds of a different feather from Shareholders in a Joint-Stock speculation.

GETTING OUT OF IT.

"Where *are* you going, George? The Omnibus will be here directly, and we're all ready to start."

"Yes, dearest! A—I forgot to tell you—I was to meet Brown at the Club about *those Sharks*, you know, *unless he Telegraphed to the contrary*. Most *Important!* But don't trouble about me—I 'll get down by a later Train, in time for Supper."

A "GOOD GUN."

Scene—*The Moors. A Shooting Party at Lunch.*

Sm-th (*throwing himself down*). Oh! I *am* so tired!

B-lf-r (*stretching himself languidly*). So am I!

Sm-th. Oh, *you* are *always* tired, aren't you? Look so, anyhow. Haven't been exerting yourself much, so far as I have seen, up to now.

B-lf-r. My dear fellow, you have yet to learn that hurry is not pace, and that fuss is not business.

S-l-sb-ry. Well, boys, don't squabble, but lunch. We've *all* done pretty badly, up to now, and unless we do better before sundown,— [*Sighs and sips.*

Sm-th (*sorrowfully*). Yes, that's very true. [*Sips and sighs.*

B-lf-r. Well, I'm glad it's lunch-time anyhow, for I'm fairly baked.

Sm-th. Nip of Irish, B.?

B-lf-r. Irish be—*proclaimed!* Sick of the very name of Irish. *Do* let's forget it for awhile, and hand me the J. J., there's a good fellow.

S-l-sb-ry (*musing*). Humph! Pretty pair of Sportsmen! Empty rotundity, and linked languor long drawn out. Wonder what Dizzy would have thought of such a pair of guns, especially of "his successor." *Tracy Tupman* emulating *Mr. Winkle.*

Sm-th. Eh? What? Beg pardon, S-l-sb-ry, I'm *not* forty-winking.

S-l-sb-ry. Not at all, not at all. I was—ahem!—saying what a *Winkle*—ah—M-tth-ws is!

B-lf-r (*disgustedly*). Oh, M-tth-ws! Missed every bird he's tried at. Pity all burglars are not as bad shots as he. Couldn't hit a constable at ten yards.

S-l-sb-ry (*drily*). Not if he *tried.* I never feel safe at twenty. If he hasn't peppered us all round, it isn't *his* fault.

Sm-th. And—ahem—G-sch-n hasn't turned out *quite* the success we expected, eh? That last miss of his was rather a bad one.

S-l-sb-ry. Humph! perhaps. Still, I wish he'd brought one or two of his friends with him.

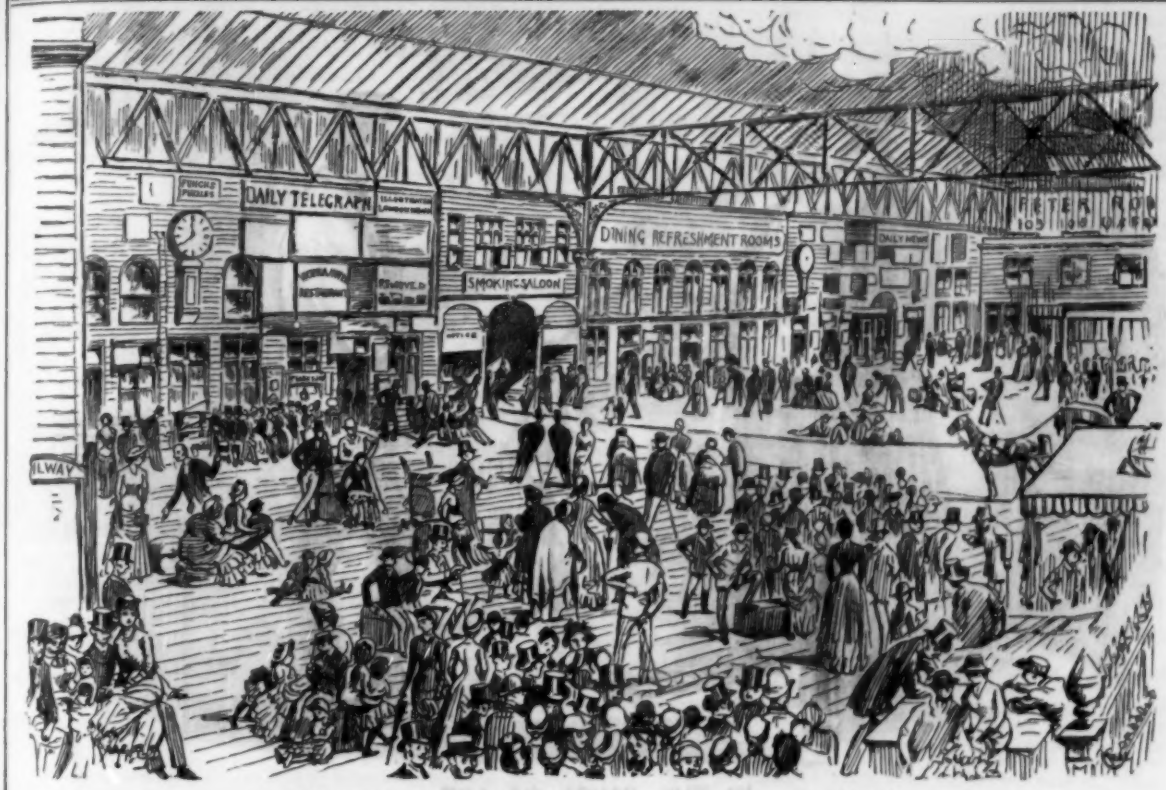
B-lf-r. Well, perhaps they'll join us later on.

S-l-sb-ry (*aside*). I *hope* so. Not much prospect of a decent bag if they don't, I fear. Fact is, my party this year's a failure. Scarcely a good gun among them. Finest and largest shooting-ground we've had for years, and *yet* we can't make a bag. Adjoining Moor supposed to be an absolute failure, and yet the party who've taken it—on most Liberal terms I hear, and with little hope of good sport—are picking up birds like fun. Pop, pop, pop, pop! and every bang a bird. Old G. getting quite cock-a-whoop about it. Fancies he'll top us at the end of the shoot. Quite wrong, of course. Now that, at last, we've really dropped upon that rascally gang of Irish poachers who had leagued themselves together to play the mischief with our Moor, I guess we shall astonish G.'s party a trifle. *They* wink at the poaching Paddies. Most unsportsmanlike conduct I ever heard of. What'll they do, *now*, I wonder? Still we can't afford to go on muffing and missing *too* long. Bang! There goes another. And one of our birds, too, I'll be bound. Hillo! by Jove, there's H-rt-ngt-n, sauntering this way, and by himself, too. Something like a shot, *he* is, and, if he'd join us—well, well, we shall see. Looks, as usual, as though he didn't care a single tomtit for things in general, and shooting in particular. Often lets a bird go from sheer indifference, but seldom misses one from lack of skill. Sure he can't be comfortable with *that* lot—indeed, he owns it. And they don't like his friendliness with us. Why can't he join us, and have done with it?

H-rt-ngt-n (*approaching*). Ah! there they are. And a jolly lot of Sportsmen they look. Poor S-l-sb-ry, I pity him. Ought to have swept the Moors. Birds plentiful, and lots of guns. But no shots. Doosed awkward. Know what it is to shoot with a party one doesn't get on with. Our party not the right sort now; awfully mixed—doesn't suit me a bit. G. has let in too many outsiders. If they'd rally round me now, and let me pick 'em! But the picked rallyers are so precious few, and the rest, instead of closing up to me, seem to be tailing off after Gl-dst-ne, somehow, confound 'em! One

A "GOOD GUN."

S-L-SB-RY. "I SAY, OLD FELLOW, I WISH YOU'D COME AND JOIN US, AFTER LUNCH!!"
H-RT-NGT-N. "WELL—ER—FACT IS—I'M WAITING TO SEE IF MY PARTY'S COMING UP!!"



RAILWAY STATION PUZZLE. TO FIND A SEAT.

Ch-mb-rl-n doesn't make a shooting party, even with Br-ght thrown in. Don't want to shoot against S-l-sb-ry, though, I'm sure. Much rather drive the birds his way. But join him!—humph!

S-l-sb-ry (*hailing*). Hillo, H-rt-ngt-n, old man, how are you? All alone? Where's your party?

H-rt-ngt-n. Oh! they're along behind there, somewhere. How are *you* getting on?

S-l-sb-ry. Oh, pre-e-t-ty well—considering. Hardly got our hands in yet,—some of us (*significantly*). Birds a bit shy, too. But we shall get among them presently, and then!——(*sotto voce*). I say old fellow, why don't you join us—after lunch? *Capital* shooting-ground, but, ahem!—some of our fellows a *leetle* wild, and one or two regular cockneys. I wan't a real good gun or two badly, and *then* we should be safe for a splendid bag. (*Aloud.*) Come, old fellow, what do you say?

H-rt-ngt-n. Tha-a-nks. Awfully kind, I'm sure. But—ah—fact is, I'm just waiting to see if my Party's coming up. [*Left waiting.*

RICHARD JEFFERIES.

Lover of Nature, whom her lovers love,
Those who were dear to thee to *them* are dear:
The world's hard way to lift their lives above
Is a clear duty, welcome as 'tis clear.
And if for every page of pure delight,
Those fine and faithful fingers wrought for all,
There came the slenderest gift, the poorest mite,
More lightly on those stricken hearts might fall,
The weight of sore bereavement, hard to bear,
E'en when, as here, all men its sorrow share.

Ogres in Dairyland.—Everybody has heard of Fairy Rings, which have a sweetly Arcadian sound. But "*Dairy* Rings" do *not* savour of Arcadia, save, perchance, in the sense suggested by the stock quotation, "*Arcades ambo*—blackguards both." The function of "Dairy Rings," it seems, is artificially and injuriously to keep up the cost of produce. Not until they are broken up will people really get "Milk Below"—monopoly prices.

RAPTURE.

(*By a Radical.*)

Mr. Chamberlain (in the debate on the Lords' Amendments to the Land Bill) said, "he had never regarded the House of Lords as the special representatives of the community, that he would very much have preferred that an Amendment in the interests of the community should have proceeded from another quarter, that they were Commons' House of Parliament, and that it was they who had to look after the interests of the community, and not the House of Lords." (*Opposition Cheers.*)

Hooray! This is rather more like the old Joe,
Whom as pet of the Peers his old friends hardly know.
Does "cushioned ease" tire him already,—so soon?
Is "gentlemen" chumship no longer a boon?
Can zeal for the Union no longer determine,
The Birmingham champion to back up the ermine?
This snub to the Peers is decidedly handsome,
We'll soon have Joe talking once more about "ransom."
Oh! Spalding was splendid, and Bridgeton was brave,
And Grosvenor's defeat made the Unionists rave;
Tom Sayers ne'er landed his foe such a "oner,"
As Salisbury had at the hands of our Brunner;
But neither the news of Gladstonian gain,
Of Trevelyan's return, or the tantrums of Caine,
To Radical bosoms such a rapture affords,
As Brummagem Joe once more smiting the Lords!

Con. for the Connubially Inclined.—What is the difference between an accepted and a rejected offer of marriage? The first leads to the Matrimonial Knot; the second *is* the Matrimonial Not.

"Bon Voyage!"

Mr. Caine, who is tired Party knots of unravelling,
Is off, so 'tis said, round the world to be travelling.
Let's hope that much clearing of temper and brain
May result from this new sort of "Wanderings of Cain(e)".

IN THE CAUSE OF ART.

Patron. "When are yer goin' to start my Wife's Picture and mine? 'Cause, when the 'Ouse is up we're a goin'——"

Artist. "Oh, I'll get the Canvases at once, and——"

Patron (millionnaire). "Canvas! 'Ang it!—none o' yer Canvas for me! Price is no objec'! I can afford to pay for something better than Canvas!!"

[*Tableau!*

THE ARTIST'S HOLIDAY;

Or, a Brush with the Police.

Start for Isle of Wight.—Market for Pictures so depressed, can only afford a fortnight away from Town this Summer. Never mind! Intend to have a high old time while it lasts. Shall travel over the whole Island—Cowes, Ryde, Ventnor, Shanklin, Alum Bay, and the Needles. Travelling suggests that I'm my own "traveller"—in the Oil and Colour line! Mustn't mention this joke to my aristocratic customers, however.

On the Way Down.—Read in my favourite newspaper—"Art is a fanciful and captious mistress, exacting many sacrifices from her servants, and not infrequently putting them to considerable inconvenience." Sounds unpleasant. Wish people wouldn't write like this. True, perhaps, but not edifying. Writer goes on to say of Artists that "Respectability is arrayed in arms against them, because their ways are not as those of its smug and unimaginative votaries." (Rather a good hit that—"smug and unimaginative;"—writer not such a fool as I thought.) "Mrs. Grundy sniffs at them with righteous scorn, because their appearance, bearing, and habits, are not measurable by the standards of propriety." (I should hope not, indeed!) "The subaltern administrators of the law regard them with suspicion"—Humbug! Throw paper down in disgust. Never been interfered with by a policeman in my life. What is there in *me* to excite suspicion, I should like to know? Should write to Author of that article, and tell him he's an ass, only can't afford to waste a stamp just now.

Southampton.—Go on board boat for Ryde. Curious. Three men following me about everywhere! On stepping on to Ryde pier, they make a pounce on me. Ask to see my luggage. It seems they are "subaltern administrators of the law," disguised. I refuse to give up my keys; in order to mollify them, make a joke, and tell them "they can't Ryde the high horse here." Only reply they make is to break my bag open. Very objectionable. Crowd evidently think I'm a London thief, and hoot at me.

Ask Detectives if they think I look like a Dynamiter? They say nothing, and wink. Seem to look on my question as a "leading," or rather a misleading, one. Thank Heaven! There's nothing suspicious in my Gladstone bag. But, as these are Government emissaries, perhaps the mere possession of a "Gladstone" bag is considered to connect me in some mysterious way with Parnellism, and so with crime. Is there such a thing as a "Salisbury" bag? Wish I'd got one if there is. Perhaps it would be a good move to tell them I'm a Unionist. They reply (gruffly) "they don't want none of my gab," and that *they* intend to find out what I am precious quick.

At Police Station.—(To which I've been taken through a howling mob!) Bag opened. Several things appear to excite suspicion. Palette inspected carefully. If it hadn't been for bad success of my last humorous remark, should tell my captors that "I've no *palate* for conspiracy." My box of brushes regarded as highly questionable. Suggests obvious sporting-riddle—Why do they think I've been in at the death (of somebody or other?)—Answer: *because I've got the brush!* Bottle of Chinese White at once impounded. Considered to contain "an explosive composition," it seems. Detectives convey it carefully to middle of large field, and bury it, until Colonel Majendie can come down from Town. What, however, is regarded as greatest proof of my nefarious tendencies is a picture of London Bridge in my portfolio. Detective asks triumphantly—"What made you draw that there bridge if you ain't a Fenian, now?" I reply "it's only a pot-boiler." Answer considered so very incriminating that I am immediately handcuffed and put in a cell. Never realised before what a very "fanciful and captious mistress," Art is, or what idiots "the subaltern administrators of the law" are capable of making of themselves.

Three Days Later.—Liberated! Am told it was "all a mistake." Chinese White bottle proved not to contain anything dangerous to human life. Pot-boiler restored me, slightly soiled. No excuses or apologies made—sent away with a "free pardon!" And this is England! Ah, they manage some things better in France!

ESSENCE OF PARLIAMENT.

EXTRACTED FROM

THE DIARY OF TOBY, M.P.

House of Lords, Monday, August 15.—Some ordinary business on Agenda, but importance dwarfed by imposing demonstration made by Wemyss. Session really coming to a close. Wemyss has done his share of speechmaking. According to Denman has appropriated more than fair share. Nevertheless, he finds in Mid-August quite an accumulation of odds and ends omitted from speeches prepared during last two years. If he doesn't work them off this Session will be out of date by next. That no insuperable objection to delivering speech in House of Lords; still, freshness and appropriateness not altogether without weight. How shall he dispose of the accumulated treasure? Thought once of publishing it in single volume, call it "Jubilee Thoughts, by Earl of Wemyss:" or "Peerless Wit and Wisdom, by a Peer." Found publishers not anxious to undertake proposal. Jubilee, they said, beginning to pall, too many books about of Wit and Wisdom. Happy thought! Why not throw the scraps into form of speech, and favour House of Lords with it? Some of the topics little ancient and continuity of thought difficult to simulate; but propose to "call attention to Socialistic legislation during the Sessions of 1886 and 1887." That will cover everything.

So arranged, and to-night, as soon as immaterial business disposed of, Wemyss rose, and began his speech. Audience of eighteen, to begin with. Gradually diminished, till there remained, for fifth and final peroration, only four. Was a tremendous speech—bloodcurdling, convincing, and delivered with much animation. Never was a nation in such peril. Before Great Britain lay only Black Night and Despair.

Might have been expected that, when Wemyss sat down, there would have been eager competition for precedence to take up the thread of debate so solemnly launched. But he 'd overdone it. So terrified the few Peers present, that none could speak. Looked at each other with fitful, fearful glances. One by one they rose, and tremblingly tottered out. Wemyss left in solitary possession of House, filled only with echoes of his fearsome jeremiad. Thus closed this memorable one-speech debate. Lord Chancellor retaining presence of mind sufficient to adjourn the House, Wemyss picked up his notes, and went forth, probably to prepare for his own flight from the doomed country.

Columbus, M. P.

Business done.—In Commons, Mines Bill in Committee.

House of Commons, Tuesday.—John Manners in his place to-night. Everyone glad to see him back again; Liberals, Conservatives, Dissentients, Unionists, whatever we be, all unite in saying a friendly word to John on his convalescence.

Another arrival greeted with more mixed feelings. Brunner, flushed by his great victory in Northwich, comes up to be sworn in. Tremendous cheering on Liberal side. Dead silence among Ministerialists. Old Morality gazes up at glass roof with preoccupied air; thoughts far away from Westminster or Northwich either. Caine, looking on from Bar, turns his back, and marches forth.

"Another blessing in disguise," says he. "I think now I'll go off to Japan, and see how they're getting on with their projected Parliamentary Institutions. Might get some hints for forming our National Party."

Crimes Bill on again. Committee pegging away far into to-morrow. A good business-like debate, but a little dull. Minority of between seventy and eighty industriously tried to carry Amendments moved by Burt and others. Majority, varying between 120 and 140, thinking matter over in privacy of smoke-room, news-room, and terrace, come up with minds fully made up on points of detail, and always vote with Ministers. Burt, beaten again and again, comes back to scratch, looking, towards half-past two in the morning, a little broken down, but still full of fight.

T. B-rt.

Business done.—Mines Bill.

Thursday.—House of Lords deserves well of its country. Is setting Commons example it will do well to follow. On Monday, as noted, Wemyss made long speech, and, no one rising to follow in debate, House forthwith adjourned. Same thing happened on Tuesday when Denman introduced beneficent proposals for limiting speeches. Met with success beyond his wildest expectations. Had asked that duration of speeches might be strictly limited. Lords with one accord forthwith accepted principle. Applied it so strictly that, as Lord Chancellor in his epigrammatic way put it, "speeches were limited to silence." In fact no one spoke at all. Denman had debate all to himself, and House adjourned. So pleased with this arrangement that it was carried a step further to-night. Only one speech was made. Was delivered from Woolsack. So brief may be quoted *verbatim*:—

"House will now adjourn," said Lord Chancellor.

That was all, and noble Lords dispersed.

"Most pleasant, informing and useful sitting we've had for many Sessions," said Buckingham to Chandos.

"*Allons!*" said Stratheden to Campbell, "let us go and visit those foolish Commons who waste their time in much speaking."

Commons crowded and animated. Evidently no prospect here of foregoing speech-making. Sixty-eight questions on paper to begin with. George Campbell, his mind athirst for information, wanted to know from President of Board of Trade what was the meaning of "allotment." Ritchie, with elbow leaning negligently on box, and legs crossed, mockingly referred the ingenuous Knight to *Johnson's Dictionary*. Curiously reminiscent of *Mephistopheles* bantering *Faust*, was Ritchie as he looked across at Campbell.

Mephistopheles, M. P.

Old Morality announced abandonment of various Government measures, dropping tear over each. Emotion became monotonous towards tenth tear, and Opposition rudely laughed. But Old Morality had his revenge later. Quite a long time since he has "pounced." But as midnight drew on, and little progress made, began to grow desperate. Chamberlain suddenly turned upon his allies, attacked them in rattling speech. Even voted against them when Division called. Government majority went down from customary hundred to alarming forty-two. Then Old Morality, goaded to madness, "pounced" right and left. Harcourt stirred up Goschen with long pole; Balfour yawned ostentatiously when Dillon convicted him of ignorance of Irish affairs; Parnell pounded away; T. W. Russell withdrew from alliance with Government; Tim Healy chuckled; Joseph Gillis alternately jeered and groaned. But Old Morality came out victor. Whenever lull occurred he moved Closure, and so presently wound up sitting.

Business done.—Split between "Dissentient Liberals" and Government.

Friday.—House not so full to-night. Rumour about that there was something to fore in Lords. Members migrated thither. Only a few Peers present. Markiss rose, and in matter-of-fact tone, as if offering observation on state of weather, announced Proclamation of National League. Fifteen Peers present successfully controlled emotion, and passed on to ordinary business. Commons, penned in Gallery above, and crowded at Bar below, rushed to own House,

carrying news with them. Arrived just in time to hear Hanbury question Government on quite other subject. Hanbury's hawk eye had discovered in the Estimates vote for salary of Master of Hawks. Wanted to know who he was, what he did for a living, and how many hawks he might have to deal with in course of year. Frank and somewhat startling disclosure from Treasury Bench. The existence of Master of Hawks admitted; regular payment of his salary confessed. Only hitch was that there were no hawks. Still, there have been hawks in time of Stuarts. An impecunious nobleman had obtained office, with reversion to eldest son; and so, through the ages, unsuspecting taxpayer had subscribed salary. House so ashamed to discover its remissness as custodian of Public purse, that, by common consent, subject dropped. But silent resolution taken that noble Hawk-master shall have drawn his salary for last time.

Then Balfour confirmed statement made in other House about Proclamation of National League. Announcement received, on the whole, in grim silence, also not without its portent. House then took up Allotments Bill, with which it wrestled in business fashion for rest of sitting.

Business done.—National League Proclaimed.

MEASURE FOR MEASURE.

(*Shakspeare adapted to "The Times."*)

"Oppression hath made up this League."
King John, Act iii., Scene 1.

Angelo . . Lord S-l-sb-ry.
Escalus . . B-lf-r.

Escalus. Every leader it hath writ hath disvouched other.

Angelo. In most uneven and distracted manner. Its actions show much like to madness: pray heaven its wisdom be not tainted. Yet can we own ourselves beaten, and redeliver our authority?

Esc. I guess not.

Ang. And why should we proclaim it a few days before our departure, that if any crave redress of injustice, they must not exhibit their discontent in the street?

Esc. It shows its reason for that: to have a despatch of complaints; and to deliver us from devices hereafter, which shall then have no power to stand against us.

Ang. Well, I beseech you, let it be proclaimed!

A Tale of Arabi.—The recent unsuccessful effort to secure the release of Arabi Pasha, recalls the trial of that unfortunate Egyptian when he was so ably defended by a distinguished member of the British Bar. On that occasion, to put it Broadley, he was more of a patriot than a criminal.

"*Eclipse* first, the rest nowhere," is a celebrated racing record. The disappointed astronomers of Europe, last Friday, modified the *mot*—"Eclipse nowhere" is the common burden of their reports.

Motto for Agriculturists.—Set a parasite (*the Chalcis fly to wit*) to catch a parasite (*the Hessian ditto*).

A BURNING QUESTION.

By Our Own Cricket Enthusiast.

"The four Counties in whose doings the interest of the Cricketing public is centred, were all hard at work yesterday. [Friday, August 19.] Yorkshire doing very badly against Surrey at the Oval, and Nottinghamshire showing to considerable disadvantage with Lancashire at Old Trafford."—*Daily News.*

Oh, don't talk to me of the close of the Session, or who's to be Premier, perchance, in the next one;
Those questions, no doubt, may excite party spouters, but there is a *far* more important and vext one.
The Cricketing Season draws fast to a close; the rain 's come at last with inopportune bounty,
And there is a question eclipsing all others,—which, *which* for this year will be Premier County?
It 's narrowing down,—oh, it 's narrowing down, and it grows more soul-harrowing every minute,
For Surrey and Lancashire, Yorkshire and Notts are the only four Counties a man can call "in it."
Trent-Bridge is astir with a fever of fidgets, the Tykes are all hurry, and worry, and flurry,
Old Trafford is all upon thorns, and, by Jove, what excitement there is at the Oval in Surrey!

Woo "Ton."

Hornby and Hawke cannot sleep of a night, and their nerves into coolness in vain strive to tutor;
Gladstone and Salisbury's rivalry 's child's-play compared with the ditto of Sherwin and Shuter.
Plague upon Jupiter Pluvius! *Why* did he not hang aloof just a week or two longer?
Oh, don't talk to me of your turnips and things,—what are they to the question which team is the stronger?
Glorious season for Cricket all round, as is proved by the lots of Leviathan scoring,
And now, hang it all, at the very identical point when it comes to the pinch, it is pouring.
Cockshies all chance, every average crabs, this detestable deluge. Slow wickets and sticky,
Muck even the great Arthur Shrewsbury's play, and make Walter Read's chance of top-average dicky,
Arthur's two centuries *plus* sixty-seven, falls off to a pitiful seven-and-twenty,
And Barlow and Briggs have it all their own way; three "ducks" in one innings—of Notts men—seems plenty.

"Baa low!"

Look at poor Yorkshire again! Martin Hawke did his best to choose right, but caked wickets *plus* Lohmann,
Are far too long odds e'en for Ulyett and Hall; and who can foresee English weather? Why, no man.
Wants a cool sticker like Scotton to stand it. Eh? Gives the poor bowlers a look in? Oh, granted,
Good trundling's a part of the game to be sure, but you see at this crisis it's *scoring* that's wanted,
Dashes the gazers, this downing the wickets like nine-pins in swamp with muck-moisture afloat all,
And then ninety-two for a tall-scoring team like our Notts, you must own 's a contemptible total,

"'Ull yet?"

"Hide!"

Middlesex plays in and out; lots of scorers like Webbe, Stoddart, Lucas, O'Brien, and Vernon.
But Robertson, Burton, and West want assistance as bowlers, and bowling 's a thing wins will turn on.
Gloucester's slap out of it. Pity poor Grace with a team he can seldom bring up to the scratch, Sir,
So that, in spite of his own startling scores, the, at one time, "Invincibles" scarce win a match, Sir,
Sussex,—well, Quaife is a promising bat, and you always may look for some notches from Newham,
Whilst J. and A. Hide are a host in themselves; but good fortune this season has failed to pursue 'em.
Kent, with Lord Harris, the family of Hearnes, and Rashleigh, with credit should carry field matters on,
But this year they'll not be at top of the tree, 'spite the bowling of Wootton, the smiting of Patterson.
Leicester has got a good trundler in Poughkr, but one bowler won't make a good (Cricket) summer,
Whilst Derbyshire's Chatterton, Cropper, and Ratcliff don't make her, at present, the new (Cricket) comer.

The Family "Urn."

As for game Essex,—well, evergreen Green, who has done in his day some redoubtable cricket,
Will own he will not have a look in *this* year, e'en with Buxton, and Bishop, and Bryan, and Pickett.
No, we must still look to one of the four; and oh, what a lot hope that one will be Surrey.
Fancy the spirits of Griffith and Southerton—(chums of that "barn-door" whom no one could flurry,
Stout little Jupp)—must just now haunt the Oval, or hold ghostly confabulations at Mitcham,
Discussing the way in which Shuter's lot cut 'em and drive 'em, and swipe 'em, and place 'em, and pitch 'em.

Puffer.

And oh! *if* smart Shuter, crack Read, steady Lohmann, and swift-footed Maurice, and cat-like young Abel
Should once more put Surrey at top of the tree, won't the Oval just be a tumultuous Babel?

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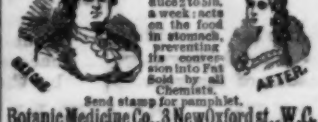

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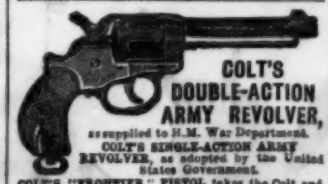

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